

PRESS RELEASE

DATE RELEASED: 27TH APRIL 1997 TIME RELEASED: 0600HRS

SOURCE: CAP/MSX/127

NATURE OF INCIDENT: DISORDER - PORTADOWN

DATE OF INCIDENT: 27/4/97 TIME OF INCIDENT: 0147HRS

FCIC STAFF TO SCENE: _____

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
PRINT TO ARMAGH PRESS OFFICE

SPECIFY TIMES
WHEN INFO
IS UPDATED

DETAILS OF INCIDENT

TO WHOM RELEASED
DATE AND TIME

Two youths have been detained in hospital with head injuries following a clash between rival factions in Portadown around 1.45am this morning. Police moved in to separate the groups who encountered each other at the junction of Thomas Street and Market Street. Bottles were thrown during the hostilities and police themselves came under attack by a section of the crowd. Order was restored around 3am.

RI BBC RTE DTR
98FM BT UTV

██████████
SERGEANT

One of the youths injured is still detained in hospital. Police at Portadown are anxious to speak to anyone who was in the area of Market Street, Woodhouse Street and Thomas Street between 1am and 2am this morning and who witnessed the incident. The detectives at Portadown can be contacted on ██████████ or the Crimestoppers number 0800 555 111.

BBC DER UTV IN
NL BT

COPY TO ARMAGH PRESS OFFICE
AGAINST ENQUIRY ONLY.

From ██████████, Bel. Tel. Any response to ██████████ allegation that police sat and watched this assault and that the press statement was not true?

2100
270497
ON KEYES

30th 1130
SUPT. ██████████
ACC HALL.

AGAINST ENQUIRY ONLY.

RESPONSE

BEL TEL &
PORTADOWN TIMES

A Police landrover crew in Portadown town centre was alerted to a disturbance and immediately intervened to gain order and prevent assaults. The numbers involved, however, were such that these Police officers were unable to contain the situation and became themselves the subject of attack. Police reinforcement arrived and calm was restored.

Detectives are continuing their investigations into this very serious assault and disturbance and take this opportunity to make a further appeal for witnesses to contact them at Portadown RUC station on [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SGT

070597
1300
D/C/I

Portadown Police are renewing their appeal for witnesses to a very serious assault which took place in the town centre, around 1.30am on the morning of Sunday 27 April.

A special team was set up to investigate this incident and a number of people have already been interviewed. It now appears clear that four people, two couples, who had left a social event in St Patrick's Hall, were set upon by a large crowd. The two men in the group of four were knocked to the ground and viciously beaten. One young man remains very ill.

On separate occasions, during the incident, two men approached the Police. One of these men has come forward and the detectives are particularly anxious to speak to the second. They would also appeal to anyone who was in the area of Market Street, Woodhouse Street and Thomas Street between 1am and 2am on the morning of Sunday 27 April, to get in touch with the CID on Portadown [REDACTED] or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. All information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

[REDACTED]
INSPECTOR

D/I ERWIN
080597

Victim of this sectarian attack died in hospital this afternoon. A murder enquiry has now commenced.

[REDACTED] Sergt

DETAILS OF INCIDENT

MURDER ROBERT HAMILL PORTADOWN 27 APRIL 1997

Detectives at Portadown have now launched a murder enquiry into the death of Robert Hamill, one of 2 men set upon by a crowd in Portadown town centre around 1.45 am on 27 April. The ACC for the region, Mr Freddie Hall, tonight expressed his deep sympathy to Mr Hamill's family and again called for witnesses to the incident to come forward. He said, " A special team was set up last week to investigate the assault and a number of people have been interviewed. We would still like to hear from anyone who was in the area of Market St, Woodhouse St and Thomas St between 1am and 2am on Sunday 27 April to get in touch with the CID at Portadown [redacted] or call the Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Mr Hall also stated, " I can assure Mr Hamill's family that my officers will be unrelenting in their search for the culprits".

BBC
DTR
IN
NL
PA
RTE DUBLIN

[redacted] Sergt

NOTE FOR FIC

Down the line done for Downtown at midnight and BBC at 1230am by ACC Hall [redacted] (in attendance)

ACC Hall will be unavailable in the early part of this morning (Friday). Any requests please liaise with Sgt [redacted]

FROM [redacted] IRISH TIMES

The Pat Finucane Centre Derry has a copy of all RUC Press releases relating to the attack which resulted in Robert Hamill's death. They have noted differences between the first release, which states that there was a clash between rival factions, and subsequent ones, which do not. Any comment?

RESPONSE

All the circumstances surrounding the death of Robert Hamill are being investigated by a D/Chief Superintendent under the supervision of the ICPC. comment.

(Also asked to carry appeal) [redacted] Sergt.

MAY 1997
1910
C/I [redacted]

MURDER ROBERT HAMILL PORTADOWN 270497

D/CI P39
100597
1900

A number of persons have been arrested and are being questioned about the murder of Robert Hamill.

[REDACTED]
Sergt

JDA 29850
00D4

5 Portadown men have been charged with murder of Robert Hamill and are expected to appear at a special sitting of Craigavon MC in Lurgan RUC Station tomorrow morning.

F Dept info

Court is at 11am. CI Phelan will attend.

[REDACTED]
Sergt

D/I IRWIN
1621 11.5.97

A further man from Portadown aged 25 has been charged with the murder of Robert Hamill. He will appear at Craigavon Magistrates Court tomorrow morning 12th May.

[REDACTED]
Insp.

Following enquiry from [REDACTED] NL and [REDACTED] UTV following press conference by Hamill family.

D/C/SUPT
McBURNEY

The crime file relating to the murder of Robert Hamill has been submitted to the DPP. The disciplinary allegations against the four officers at the scene are still being investigated by a Detective Chief Superintendent supervised by the ICPC.

[REDACTED]
Insp



MURDER OF ROBERT HAMILL, PORTADOWN , 27TH APRIL 1997.

All the circumstances surrounding the death of Robert Hamill in Portadown are being investigated by a Detective Chief Superintendent under the supervision of the Independent Commission for Police Complaints.

RUC PRESS OFFICE
ARMAGH.

GIVEN AGAINST ENQUIRY

UPDATE
090198
2 05 PM
D/C/SUPT
SOUTH REGION

ENQUIRY FROM [REDACTED] FROM THE
SUNDAY BUSINESS POST ON 9 JANUARY 1998

Request re: ROBERT HAMILL case, Portadown

1 Why was there no identity parade or identity opportunity available to the eye witness who said he could identify or would recognise one of the suspects.

2 Why did the RUC drive in the opposite direction from the man causing a disturbance outside the Hamill family home?

The man made good his escape.

3 Allegations of negligence have been levelled at the RUC in Portadown over this case. Would you like to put forward your response to these allegations.

Faxed [REDACTED] copy of press release which originated from RUC Headquarters on [REDACTED]

In response I said a file was prepared and is now with the Independent Commission for Police Complaints.

[REDACTED]
Constable

The tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Hamill has provoked considerable controversy, both over the actual circumstances as well as the conduct of police in the general area. Much of that controversy concerns allegations against police officers, allegations which are currently under investigation and which both the individuals and the RUC are therefore prevented by their legal obligations from answering publicly at this stage.

We feel strongly that whilst we are, rightly, obliged to stick rigidly to legally-binding rules, the same constraints do not apparently apply to others. The facts are yet to be determined by both the Courts in respect of a person currently in custody charged with the murder of Mr Hamill, and the separate team (supervised by the ICPC) investigating complaints against individual police officers. Until these matters are properly resolved, we ask that the public await the full facts, rather than make judgements based on a concoction of facts, rumour, hearsay and anonymous telephone calls.

The danger is that such rumours not only do a considerable disservice to police officers who cannot at this stage defend themselves, but may interfere with the continuing investigation into this tragic case and possibly impede the current Court proceedings.

Finally, we wish to make it absolutely clear that nothing in the above should take away from the deep distress felt by all the police concerned for the family and friends of Mr Hamill. His death, like so many others involving police, soldiers and the wider community alike, was an example of the deep divisions within our society, divisions we are seeking to heal.... Once again our sincere condolences go out to the family.

RUC HEADQUARTERS
3 DECEMBER 1997